

Agenda item:

**Title of meeting:** Culture, Leisure and Sport Decision Meeting

**Date of meeting:** 13 December 2013

**Subject:** Review of the offer for schools at Portsmouth Museums

**Report by:** Head of City Development and Cultural Services

**Wards affected:** ALL

**Key decision** No

**Full Council decision:** No

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**1. Purpose of report**

1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide a review of the offer for schools at Portsmouth Museums.

**2. Recommendations**

**2.1 The current offer of led sessions and the School Loans Collection is noted.**

**2.2 Positive feedback from schools attending led sessions is noted.**

**2.3 The proposed changes to the offer for schools are noted, in particular:**

**2.4 That Tudors at Southsea Castle is run for fewer days in 2014 in response to curriculum changes.**

**2.5 That Tudors at the Square Tower is removed from the schools' offer.**

**2.6 That the pricing structure for all led sessions is reviewed to ensure that costs are recovered and that future charges are based on a price per pupil rather than a charge per group.**

**2.7 That the terms on which we employ session deliverers are reviewed and the current hourly rate be replaced by payment per session.**

**2.8 That the School Loans Collection is reviewed, rationalised and re-presented to ensure that it remains high quality, accessible and relevant.**

**2.9 That from September 2014 charges are introduced for all users of the School Loans Collection - £30 for one thematic box containing multiple objects or three single item boxes per loan period (currently up to three weeks).**

### **3. Background**

- 3.1 The core offer for schools at Portsmouth Museums includes self-led visits, museum trails, led sessions delivered by Interpreter Demonstrators and the School Loans Collection.
- 3.2 The offer has changed little in recent years and a year-long review began in November 2012. The review process has been complicated by the on-going review of the National Curriculum, in particular the confirmation in October 2013 that the Tudors and World War II, key topics in the current offer for schools, will no longer be compulsory elements of the primary history curriculum from September 2014.
- 3.3 Led sessions were introduced in the 1980s. Four sessions are currently on offer, all aimed at primary schools. They are delivered on a full cost recovery basis and must attract enough bookings each year to cover costs.
- 3.4 The sessions are popular and bring around 5,500 children to Portsmouth Museums each year, many from schools outside the city.
- 3.5 Feedback from teachers shows that the sessions are highly regarded.
- 3.6 However, bookings have been inconsistent in recent years and from September 2014 three of the four led sessions, which support work on the Tudors and the Home Front, are unlikely to be viable in their current format.
- 3.7 The School Loans Collection was established in the late 1960s / 1970s. It is a rich and versatile resource and has been well-used and enjoyed by generations of children and teachers but is now showing its age.
- 3.8 Some loans items, particularly the natural history specimens, have remained popular. Demand for other items has fallen due to curriculum changes or technological advances (video tapes).
- 3.9 The School Loans Collection is free. This does not reflect the staff time involved in administering and managing the loans and is out of step with other museums which usually charge for loans.

### **4. Reasons for recommendations**

- 4.1 Portsmouth Museums has an impressive track record of delivering high quality, collections-based learning opportunities for schools. The schools' offer has changed little in recent years. If it is to remain attractive and financially viable it must respond to changing needs and expectations in an increasingly competitive market.

4.2 These recommendations are informed by a year-long review of the schools' offer and the new National Curriculum which comes into force in September 2014.

4.3 The new National Curriculum undoubtedly presents challenges. Changes to the primary history curriculum will have a direct impact on the current led sessions which are financed by booking fees. However these changes also give us opportunities to re-evaluate how we work with schools and to think creatively about how we can put collections at the heart of learning to enable children to access, understand, enjoy and be inspired by their cultural heritage.

## 5. Equality impact assessment (EIA)

5.1 An equality impact assessment is not required as the recommendations do not have a negative impact on any of the protected characteristics as described in the Equality Law 2010.

## 6. Legal Implications

6.1 There are no Legal Implications relating to the matters set out in this report.

## 7. Head of Finance Comments

7.1 The school led sessions have previously covered the immediate costs of delivery. To ensure that this continues, a financial appraisal to review the impact of the recommendations in this report will be undertaken in order to establish that:

- The full costs of delivering led sessions are recovered by the income received
- A new pricing structure is developed to charge for led sessions on a price per pupil basis and that session deliverers are paid on a cost per session.

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Signed by:  
**Stephen Baily**  
Head of City Development and Cultural Services

**Appendices: Appendix 1 - Review of the Offer for Schools at Portsmouth Museums**

**Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972**

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location
None	

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/ rejected by Cabinet Member for Culture Leisure and Sport on 13 December 2013

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Signed by:  
**Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Sport**